

Il ne faut pas se fier aux apparences

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Il ne faut pas se fier aux apparences

by [Watermelonsmellinfellon](#)

Summary

Hannibal Lecter met a young boy in France back in the 90s. Meeting that same boy again thirty years later must be a sign. Will Graham was just enjoying the ride.

Notes

For @misery9980!

Il ne faut pas se fier aux apparences = Don't judge appearances. Or, don't judge a book by its cover.

TAGS: Drama, Time-Skip, Dark Hanni and Will, Will Knows, Meet Cute imo, 2 sociopaths meeting.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

A/N: Hello, people!

I don't own Hannibal.

I have no beta.

ENJOY!

CHECK ME OUT ON TUMBLR. [HELLY-WATERMELONSMELLINFELLON.](#)

~.O.~

Uncle Robertus was very... lenient with Hannibal, in unexpected ways. Ever since he'd taken Hannibal from that place so long ago, he'd been strangely accepting of Hannibal's quirks and behaviors.

Not to say that Hannibal was ever an ill-mannered child or teenager. In fact, he'd been quite calm and composed compared to his peers. However, Hannibal had shown an interest in topics and talents not often pursued by children. Not even young adults.

His skill in manipulation made his interest in philosophy and human psychology more pronounced. He liked learning what made people tick and how he could manipulate them in order to get what he wanted out of them. Robertus simply saw a questioning youth with a troubled past, looking for ways to keep himself distracted from his trauma.

Robertus' wife however... saw things differently.

Lady Murasaki was very intelligent, in ways that made even Hannibal uncomfortable. It had nothing to do with her martial skills or the ability to learn languages easily. Both were impressive, that was true, but not truly what caused concern to well up on Hannibal's being.

The woman was very good at watching and even better at waiting. Her husband's success in life was due mostly to her presence. She was capable of discerning the most minute of tells in his opponents' reactions. Able to weasel information out of people using their own racism to her benefit. She could even handle the realm of commerce with better understanding, controlling everything from behind her husband's affluent title and social status.

When he'd met her for the first time, Hannibal had known she wasn't like the average fool on the street. Traditional Japanese garb aside, it was the shrewd look in her eyes that set her apart from everyone else. It's what put him on edge around her.

Hannibal had much respect for his aunt, because she was someone who commanded it. Deserved it. Robertus was a fool and at most, Hannibal viewed him as a fluffy puppy, easily led around by the nose and taken advantage of.

Not to say that Murasaki didn't love Robertus. She in fact cared a great deal for him and did everything in her power to tear down any opposition he faced. Even if that opposition came in the form of a derogatory comment here and there, Murasaki did not let it go unaddressed. Her will to keep the Lecter line thriving in any way meant loyalty was a must.

Robertus didn't ever realize she manipulated him though. He saw his sweet, caring wife. Majestic and knowledgeable in the arts and sciences. Perfect in every way and completely incapable of harboring a negative bone in her body. After she saved his life all those years ago, Robertus could never have it in himself to entertain even a suggestion that his wife was anything but an angel.

Their devotion to each other was quite rare and a bit disconcerting.

Hannibal chose to follow his pursuits in private, except for the occasional weekly lesson on how to wield a sword from Murasaki.

Robertus simply thought he was introverted and traumatized. He allowed Hannibal to do whatever he wanted because while he thought his nephew was dealing with stress and trauma, Hannibal had never been anything but perfectly polite in the company of others. He could trust that Hannibal would behave and not bring shame to their House.

That was how Hannibal was allowed to go anywhere he wanted and do anything he wanted without question. even at the tender age of sixteen.

Often, Hannibal liked visiting the Eiffel Tower simply so he could draw the skyline of Paris. It was relaxing to feel the breeze and see the sights, and not have to worry overly much about tourists the higher up they got.

It was a good place to think. To reminisce. To wonder.

There was a minor disturbance in the air seconds before Hannibal was aware that he was not alone. Pure self-control was the only reason for why he didn't stiffen. Lady Murasaki had put him through all sorts of training and something as simple as this getting one over on him would disappoint her greatly.

On his left, a young child stepped up to the railing and rested their chin on it in order to get a good view of the city below. From where he sat, Hannibal could see a head full of chocolate curls, and a brand name, charcoal grey pea coat.

After a moment of consideration, the child looked back, revealing big, bright eyes of cerulean blue. "*Bonjour.*"

Decent pronunciation, but still obviously accented. Not a native to France either.

Hannibal sent the boy a nod.

"Do you... know anything in English?"

"Yes, it is my third language."

The boy sagged in obvious relief. "I'm from Louisiana and grew up speaking a weird mix of English, French, and Spanish. My accent is bad in all of them though. I was encouraged to speak as little as possible in France until I'm perfect at the language. This way I don't bring shame on my mother's family by sounding like some country bumpkin."

Ah, the usual expectation of children in upper class circles. And from a foreign child it had to be even more difficult. An American child no less.

"Your pronunciation was very good in my opinion," Hannibal told him. "Would you like to practice a few lines?"

Blue eyes widened and the boy nodded rapidly. "I'm Will. Um- I mean, *je m'appelle William. Tu?*"

"Hannibal," he murmured, reluctantly charmed by the young child. "Charmed."

"Hannibal like the Carthaginian General?"

A young American child aware of the obscure history of a land not his own? Impressive.

"Exactly like him. I'm the eighth Hannibal in my line."

Young William hummed, giving him a very deliberate look over. "Are you a baron or something? You feel very fancy despite being a teen."

Hannibal was shocked the boy could tell he wasn't an adult yet. Everywhere he went, he was mistaken for a grown man already. Having the advantage of height on his side so early on in life was useful. His training with Murasaki helped better hone his body during his growth.

He didn't personally feel that he looked like a teenager.

"If you're wondering how I know, it's in the face. You have no facial creases anywhere and your skin is youthful and still has that small bit of pudge of youth to it. There's no sign of age or wear either."

William had to be ten at the most, so his ability to notice such details and even think to look for them at his age, was incredibly impressive. "You aren't wrong," he confessed. "I'm sixteen."

"I'm eight!"

Even younger than Hannibal had been expecting. "You are very eloquent for your age." Another impressive feat.

William's brows furrowed for a moment, before widening. "My papa was only able to get me a dictionary to read growing up. The back has a thesaurus and it's more interesting than fairytales. Though I do end up offending people more than anything. I'm '*troublesome and willful*'," he quoted, nose rising imperiously as he mocked someone in his life.

"I happen to find you a very charming conversationalist," Hannibal remarked. Best to encourage intelligence in young children so they might go on in life and not add themselves to the banal dregs of society.

The child flushed a bit and waved his hand. "That's only because you aren't an idiot."

Very astute of him.

Hannibal set his sketchpad aside, more interested in talking to the boy before him than sketching something he already memorized the sight of months ago. "I find myself curious how you're all the way up here without a chaperone."

"I had one but he's a fool and I don't like being near him, so I walked away while he was talking to the woman at the counter."

"Surely you'll be in trouble for that?"

William smirked. "The one benefit to being a child is people thinking I'm too dumb to be manipulative. No one at the estate thinks I'm smart and because my French is bad they especially think I'm stupid on top of it. So, the new chauffeur losing the Madame's child out in the middle of Paris when he's so shy and too dumb to get around on his own isn't going to go well. For *him*."

Somehow, Hannibal had managed to attract the attention of a little rascal who was also a budding manipulator.

Lovely.

"Have you done this before?"

"No," the boy admitted a bit bashfully. "I've been out a few times, but I've never done this before because it wasn't the right time. This isn't something you can just do over and over, you know. If you make it a habit, even stupid people will begin to notice a trend and then they'll start looking too closely."

Smart. Hannibal continued to be impressed by this child.

"When people pay too much attention they become a threat," he murmured, curious to see the boy's opinion on his assertion.

"And then you have no freedom to do whatever you want," William agreed. "I'll let him find me in an hour or so. I know his type. He won't report my disappearance to anyone just yet because he wants to keep his job and knows this'll get him fired at the very least. He'll try to find me himself before anything and once he does, he'll bribe me with something to keep me silent."

"And did you perhaps do all of this in hopes of *getting* something in particular?"

William's face morphed into one of adorable innocence. If he hadn't been speaking to the boy for several minutes already, he might have fallen for it. "I would never do such a thing, Mr.

Hannibal." Which meant of course he would. "However, if there just so happens to be a McDonald's somewhat near the estate, and I'm not allowed to have fast food for dumb reasons, then of course I should do my best to take advantage of any potentially beneficial situations that arise."

All this just to get some terrible food. Hannibal couldn't say he understood that need very much.

"I'm poor," William explained with a shrug. "My papa and I were too poor to even have fast food. Then one day he got hurt and the Madame came and said I had to come to France with her. Said she was my mother despite how she left papa the moment she gave birth to me all those years ago. I went from having to fish in a creek for daily dinners, to being forced to eat these gross dishes that only fancy rich people can have. So while the situation changed, I still consider myself poor, and to super poor people, McDonald's is considered a luxury."

There was a moment of time during William's explanation, where Hannibal wondered if the boy should be so open about his personal information with total strangers. However, he was also very intelligent and probably determined that of all the people around, Hannibal was the least likely threat to children. His threat level against adults was a different story entirely.

Hannibal would *never* harm a minor. Ever. Children were still learning and needed teaching above all else.

"I suppose in those circumstances, I can understand your interest," Hannibal conceded. "I *did* experience a time of prolonged starvation and homelessness in my youth, and at that time I was willing to eat even raw meat just to survive. In hopeless situations, you cannot be picky."

William nodded. "Besides, there's nothing wrong with liking unhealthy stuff. McDonald's is like a treat and should be saved for special occasions. I'm going to get a Happy Meal. I've never had one before and I'm not allowed to have cheeseburgers because they are '*the detritus of the impoverished*'."

Forbidding children from having the opportunity to enjoy the basic staples of childhood was ridiculous. "Then I hope your first experience is all you've ever wanted it to be."

William beamed. "And I hope that you find something new to keep you occupied in the coming days. It can't be healthy sitting here every day, lingering on past hurts."

Hannibal's eyes widened without his consent, and William shrugged. "Your thoughts and feelings are pretty loud. I think you need a change of scenery and something new to appreciate to help you fully move on. I've always wanted to go to Italy and explore all the cool art museums and the old cathedrals. Maybe you can go there and see them for me, and maybe they'll help you feel better."

In their entire conversation, Hannibal never once thought he'd given any of his personal issues away. He was typically very self-controlled and resilient.

Yet William had picked up on the direction of his head space so easily. In so little time together.

Interesting. That went beyond basic intelligence. That had to do with human psychology and the understanding of human interaction and interpersonal relationships. Emotional depth and mental acuity.

Just how smart was this young boy before him?

William looked down at his wrist, revealing a Rolex watch. "I have to go let the chauffeur find me now. It was nice talking to you, Mr. Hannibal. I hope you get what you need out of life."

"The same to you, William. It's been a pleasure speaking with you."

The boy flashed him a grin before departing, his adorable curls flopping to and fro as he took his leave.

How fascinating.

Suddenly, he had the urge to travel to Italy and explore. Maybe... he could do just that. Lady Murasaki was already having him learn Italian anyway. First hand experience could do him some good.

"Young Master William!"

Will barely withheld the urge to roll his eyes. The panicking wasn't something he wanted to deal with, even if he planned to capitalize on it for his own benefit.

"Where *were* you?! I couldn't find you anywhere," Afton said, running his gloved hands through Will's hair in hopes of setting it to rights so he looked less of a mess.

"There was a strange man offering me McDonald's, but then another man came up and threatened to call the police if he didn't let me go. He then brought me back here and gave me money for a pay phone," Will lied, pulling a handful of change out of his pocket. Said change had been plucked from the pockets of random passersby who weren't good at keeping their money safe.

Afton's panic seemed to triple in strength as he looked around in concern, trying to find the creepy man Will made up on the spot.

"I *did* want the McDonald's though. I've never had any."

His chauffeur sighed and fixed Will's lapels. "How about we stop and get some before returning to the estate? In return for you keeping this terrible event secret, yes?"

"Um... okay! Can I get a Happy Meal, please?"

"Of course, sir. As many as you'd like."

"Thanks, Afton! You're my favorite!" Just some subtle manipulation thrown in there for good measure.

And Afton was now securely in his corner. As expected.

This had to be the greatest day of his life so far. He met someone who *wasn't* an idiot and who actually treated him like a person. And he got to just talk to someone without them thinking his accent made him illiterate. And now he was going to get a Happy Meal after a successful manipulation tactic on his driver.

A great day indeed.

He wished he could see Hannibal again, but the chances of him being allowed back to the Eiffel Tower were incredibly slim. After all, this was supposed to be a learning experience, not a day for tourism. The Madame wouldn't allow frivolity of any sort.

If she thought Will had fun today, she'd try extra hard to make his future lessons miserable and boring.

Papa's death landed Will in the most unfortunate situation of his life. He'd rather be homeless and on the road his whole life, having to fish in random creeks each day, than be in France and dealing with etiquette lessons ordered by a woman who never wanted him.

He'd looked into it. Abortion options in the 80s weren't very safe for women so she refused to take the chance at the risk of her own health. However, it had been impressed upon him that she had wanted to abort him and hadn't wanted to deal with the struggle of childbirth or raising a child.

Will didn't even mind that. It was a lot of work to be a parent and it was obvious the Madame wasn't meant for parenting. He'd known her for three months and he knew immediately that she sucked in all the ways that mattered. He wouldn't wish her on any child.

Leaving him with his papa the moment he could safely move on her own wasn't even a problem to him. Bill had been a better parent by far even in their unfortunate living situation. He was great and fully ready to do the job he signed up for.

However... daring to come around and act like she was suddenly a parent and had a right to him now? No. Unforgivable.

The Madame cannot have children. Whatever happened, that Will didn't care about by the way, made it so she can't get pregnant anymore. She was an only child. The family now came down to Will, the bastard she'd thrown away all those years ago in favor of politics. If they didn't want to lose everything to some dumb contract written up years ago, which surrendered their family's possessions to another of equal standing in the Parisian scene, then they needed a male heir.

Suddenly Will was needed and important. Suddenly she thought she could come around and give him orders. And the government just let the bitch do it.

Whenever the option became available, Will was going to take everything from them, and return to the US. He'd get the great education and do the prissy etiquette lessons. He'd take everything he could from the Madame's family *while* he could, and when he was finally put in charge, he'd sell it all off to the same family they'd been dreading losing to for decades.

Now wasn't the time for rebellion. Now was the time for careful planning and destruction from within. Will would play the long game. He'd get the staff on his side, proving himself much better than his relatives. And then, when everything came to a head, he'd get away unscathed.

The only sad part was the fact that he'd probably never get to see Hannibal again.

The teen had been pretty cool compared to everyone Will had encountered in France during these past few months. It would have been nice to have a new friend, even if said friend was a possible murderer and definite sociopath. The age difference didn't mean anything in Will's eyes since in terms of maturity they were pretty much on the same level.

Hannibal didn't feel like a goldfish. Not like everyone else did.

Well... if they were ever meant to meet again, then they would.

And, if somehow that did happen, Will would hold nothing back.

[30 YEARS LATER]

When Will laid eyes upon the psychiatrist Jack Crawford wanted to bring into the Shrike case, he felt his heart stop and the restart at a pace too quick to be safe.

By the look in Hannibal's eyes, his recognition was returned. It had been three decades since Will had laid corporeal eyes on the handsome man who frequented his dreams for years after their meeting. Hannibal had barely changed, and yet he was completely different.

Suave, high class, and cheekbones that could cut glass. Yes, he hadn't changed in the least. And yet the darkness in him was greater than it had been when Will met him. Fully realized and unrepentant. Hannibal had totally embraced himself during their separation and he stood before Will as a man in control of his life and his choices.

Will always held the belief that if he met unique people more than once, then it was for good reason. To see this man again, after so many years, was a sign. He might not be superstitious, but this was no mere coincidence.

They met at the Eiffel Tower in 1990. Will had just been brought over from the US and Hannibal was a young adult close to entering university. His accent suggested he was from elsewhere, but he had that expensive upbringing that was obvious in every action he made.

To meet this man again, thirty years later, in Virginia of all places... To think that both of them pursued such similar careers, and chose to do so in the states. Then both ended up involved in the same murder case, trying to help the FBI solve said case.

No, something else was at play.

A Baltic teen and an American boy meeting in France and then again in the US decades later? It sounded like some strange happenstance one would find in a novel. Or a television drama.

The moment he was alone in Hannibal's presence for the first time in such a long time... Will smiled. "Hello, Hannibal."

"William, it's most gratifying to see that you're doing well."

They were almost the same height. Maybe an inch of difference between them. Hannibal looked very fit for a forty-six year old man. He lacked the expected pomp of one of his station, but considering how he acted around Jack, it was obvious why he'd dressed down for this occasion. He wanted to present a cute and fluffy exterior. Harmless, when he was anything but that.

"Seems we both got out of our respective shitty situations and made something of ourselves, huh?"

A smirk curled thin lips, making those sharp cheekbones more pronounced. "Indeed. You're looking very well. I confess I was curious how things had turned out for you. So brave and dangerously intelligent at such a young age. Certainly a prize for anyone with a discerning eye."

Will snorted inelegantly. "I'm swimming in a world of goldfish, and occasionally do I, an anglerfish, encounter anything *but* goldfish. You left an impression on me, Dr. Lecter."

"If I'm not a goldfish, then what am I?"

"Ever heard of the barracuda?"

Hannibal looked amused. "An interesting choice. You view yourself as the patient sort of predator, who waits and lures their prey in with pretty, natural allure. I am a different sort of predator. A ferocious scavenger who lives the solitary life of a hunter. A fascinating way to view my existence, I must admit."

"Also a very truthful one as well."

"Perhaps."

Which meant *definitely*. Barracuda were vicious predators and the creature that lay beneath Hannibal's person suit was just as terrifying in nature. Will was the patient predator who preferred his prey come to him. Hannibal liked going out personally and getting bloody and involved.

Thirty years hadn't dulled the danger in his eyes. He had become a finely sharpened weapon.

If he was a budding murderer back when they met, he was certainly more involved now. Probably a serial killer. And there were many of those currently at large at this very moment.

Fascinating.

"I feel compelled to invite you to dinner," Hannibal offered, holding up an expectant hand and accepting Will's with a gentle hold. He was warm and smooth to the touch. "A meeting of old friends should be celebrated. After all, I took your advice, explored Italy during my gap year, and found much meaning in life and living. I should show you my appreciation."

Will couldn't deny that he was flattered. A sixteen year old took the advice of a boy half his age, and took it seriously on top of that.

Also... Will recalled the sudden surge of murders in Florence around 1993. A mere three years after their meeting a serial killer called Il Mostro arose and gained international attention because of how elaborate his murders were and how he was able to perform such shows and not get caught.

The time frame would add up. Hannibal would have been nineteen then, the perfect time to take a break between secondary school and university. Go off and find oneself in another land.

"Where did you go? I was thinking of Naples and Bologna when I suggested it."

"Florence."

Confirmation!

"I hope you took extra care with your safety with that *monstrous* serial killer roaming the streets at night."

The glint in Hannibal's eyes made Will's spine tingle. He knew that Will knew. Good. That made things a lot more interesting.

"I was very safe, I assure you, William."

"You can call me Will, Hannibal. Shouldn't friends be on better terms?"

"Of course. Your offer must mean you've accepted my dinner invitation, yes?"

"Depends on what's being served."

"Anything you'd like."

"And if I'd like you?"

Burgundy eyes dilated instantly. "I'm certain I can arrange something for you specifically."

Pretty hot.

A/N: The first is done!

How was it? Let me know!

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See ya! :D

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End Notes

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